



Setti D. Warren
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone
(617) 796-1120
Telefax
(617) 796-1142
TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

Candace Havens
Director

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS
NEWTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

DATE: February 28, 2013

PLACE/TIME: City Hall, Room 202
7:30 p.m.

ATTENDING: David Morton, Acting Chair
William Roesner, Member
Rodney Barker, Member
Katy Holmes, Staff
Nancy Grissom, Member
Don Tellalian, Member
Len Sherman, Alternate
See Attendance List

ABSENT: Donald Lang, Chair
Alfred Wojciechowski, Member

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. with David Morton presiding as Acting Chair. Voting permanent members were Morton, Grissom, Roesner, and Barker. Tellalian voted on behalf of Don Lang. Sherman voted on behalf of Alfred Wojciechowski. Katy Holmes acted as recording secretary and the meeting was digitally recorded.

35 Webster Street – Demolition Review

Steven Buchbinder, lawyer (not present) representing the owners of this property, withdrew the application for this property on this agenda and plans to present the application at a future meeting of the Commission. This property was not discussed and no vote was taken.

31 Agawam Road – Demolition Review

Ward Shiffman, owner and developer for this property, presented an application to demolish the residence and told the Commission that the house had several deficiencies. The Commission reviewed the application and photographs of the property. Staff stated that this 1952 Ranch style home was constructed by John Elander a developer who operated in Newton during the mid-20th century. The building is located in an early 20th century neighborhood predominantly with Colonial Revival architecture with Tudors and other styles nearby. The property was home to

Percy and Louise Spencer. Percy (1884-1970) was a radar specialist working at Raytheon and also an inventor. Most notably, Percy is credited with inventing the microwave. Staff told the Commission that while the building itself is not a substantial architectural example, Percy was a noted inventor. Under the Demolition Delay Ordinance, buildings associated with persons of historic importance are considered historically significant. However, it should be noted that Percy invented the microwave in 1945 prior to purchasing this property. The building retains its form and style, but is located in an area that lacks other buildings of the same style.

Roesner noted that the building displayed little historical distinction. An abutter, Kevin McCabe of 39 Agawam agreed, and was in support of the house being demolished to make way for new residential development. Roesner motioned to find the property not preferably preserved and Tellalian seconded.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 28, 2013 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0,

RESOLVED to find the residence at 31 Agawam Road Not Preferably Preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:

David Morton, Acting Chair

William Roesner, Member

Rodney Barker, Member

Nancy Grissom, Member

Don Tellalian, Alternate Member

Len Sherman, Alternate Member

244 Lexington Street – Demolition Review

Howard Shulman, realtor and representative for the property owner, presented an application to demolish the residence. The Commission reviewed the application, historical documentation, and photographs of the property. Mr. Shulman brought additional photos to the meeting and presented those as well. This circa 1885 Queen Anne style residence and carriage house were originally owned by William Scribner a local mason and contractor. Scribner had several buildings on what was a much larger parcel, the present house and carriage house are the only ones that remain. The house has had alterations including asbestos siding, vinyl replacement windows and portions of the front porch have been replaced. Portions of the siding are missing on the house and evidence of water damage and rot is present. The carriage house has had a few alterations including a new garage door, but is in a more deteriorated condition than the house with missing and broken windows and doors on the rear as well as deteriorated siding. Both buildings retain their form and massing, the house retains brackets on its porch and there may be historic detail preserved under the asbestos siding. The surrounding neighborhood context is mixed with a variety of different architectural styles including Ranch and Colonial Revival as well as new houses and a new condominium complex.

Shulman stated that the house and carriage house were in a deteriorated condition, and that their current configuration was not conducive to modern living. Shulman said that the owner was considering putting the property on the market. Roesner noted that the property served as an anchor in the neighborhood, and thought that some effort could be made to preserve it. Sherman agreed. Tellalian said he did not wish to romanticize the issue but was concerned that properties of this age and appearance were disappearing rapidly. The abutter at 252 Lexington Street asked whether the Commission could decide to allow demolition of just one building on

the lot or if they had to approve both. Morton explained the Demo Delay ordinance. Grissom motioned to find both buildings to be preferably preserved with Roesner seconding.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 28, 2013 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0,

RESOLVED to find the residence and barn at 244 Lexington Street Preferably Preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:

David Morton, Acting Chair

William Roesner, Member

Rodney Barker, Member

Nancy Grissom, Member

Don Tellalian, Alternate Member

Len Sherman, Alternate Member

257-259 Watertown Street – Demolition Review

Architect Henry Arnaudo and Gina Rome presented an application to demolish the house. The Commission reviewed the application, historical documentation, proposed plans, and photographs of the property. This circa 1840 Greek Revival residence is presently a series of condominium units. Staff explained that the former farmhouse was owned by the Adams and Stearns families who operated farms here. Daniel Stearns also produced tripe (organ meat). The Stearns family occupied several 19th century residences in Newton. The Stearns family over time subdivided land and the nearby Stearns Playground is named for the family. The building has had substantial alterations over time including vinyl siding, replacement windows, as well as several additions to the rear and the addition of a front porch. The surrounding neighborhood context consists of apartment complexes and multi-family housing. The Commission was also told that buildings of this period and style are rare in the City of Newton, approximately 200 Greek Revival buildings remain in the City.

Arnaudo told the Commission the building had four total units and that the building had been ‘butchered’ over time. Commission members offered suggestions as to how to add onto the existing building, but were told that it would be difficult to discern original historic material under years of additions and questionable maintenance. Tellalian said he did not see much residual style here, and Grissom agreed. Sherman also agreed. Ms. O’Reilly, owner of the house next door, said she thought this building was an eyesore and would be happy to see it go. Modern times need modern solutions, she said. Tellalian moved to find the property at this address to be Not Preferably Preserved.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 28, 2013 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 4-2, with Barker and Roesner opposed.

RESOLVED to find the residence at 257-259 Watertown Street Not Preferably Preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:

David Morton, Acting Chair

Don Tellalian, Alternate Member

Nancy Grissom, Member

Leonard Sherman, Alternate Member

Opposed:

Rodney Barker, Member

William Roesner, Member

111 Hanson Road – Demolition Review

Property owner Frank Utano and his wife Laura presented an application to demolish the house. The Commission reviewed the application and photographs of the property. This 1948 Ranch style residence is located within Oak Hill Park, but not on the path system. Staff told the Commission that the building has asbestos shingle siding in the process of being removed. The building retains its original form massing and details such as the double hung windows. Hanson Road is a mix of original Oak Hill Park Ranch residences, altered Ranch residences, and newer replacement buildings. The first owners were Kenneth and Madlyn Giracca; Kenneth worked as a civil engineer. The building does not possess substantial architectural features and the surrounding streetscape has been severely altered by the introduction of new buildings and second floors on what were previously one-story Ranch residences. Utano told the Commission that the house was deteriorated and had been left vacant. Grissom motioned to find the house Not Preferably Preserved with Sherman seconding.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 28, 2013 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0,

RESOLVED to find the residence at 111 Hanson Road Not Preferably Preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:

David Morton, Acting Chair

William Roesner, Member

Rodney Barker, Member

Nancy Grissom, Member

Don Tellalian, Alternate Member

Len Sherman, Alternate Member

110 Hawthorne Avenue – Demolition Review

Property owner Rick Sewall, and his architect Ron Jarek, presented an application to demolish the house. This 1924 Colonial Revival residence is located in Auburndale near the Auburndale Local Historic District. Much of Hawthorne Avenue is within the district, however this section (south of Aspen Avenue) where it is a dead-end adjacent to the Woodland Golf Course is not. Staff told the Commission that this section of the street consists of late-19th century and early-20th century residences; it was initially considered for inclusion in the district, but ultimately excluded. The immediate area consists of Queen Anne, Stick, and Colonial Revival style residences representing two waves of development from the 1890s through the early 1900's and then the 1920s through the 1930s. While there are some newer replacement residences on Hawthorne Avenue and Aspen Road, the majority of the original architecture is still present.

The house was built by Perley Meisner a local carpenter and builder living in Auburndale and the first owner was Arthur and Emma Wilson. Arthur worked as a painter. The building retains its form and massing and details including exposed rafter tails with few alterations. One window on the first floor of the northern façade has been replaced. The building lacks substantial historic architectural features and is simple in design, but fits within the streetscape. The building is located at the end of the dead-end and demolition of this building would not have as substantial an effect as one of the other buildings. The Commission has permitted demolition of nearby 78 Hawthorne Avenue and 42 Aspen Avenue, but both of these buildings had more substantial

alterations. The Commission also found 83 Aspen Avenue a 1920s Dutch Colonial preferably preserved.

Mr. Sewall told the Commission that he lives near this house and knows the neighborhood well, and that he believed the house had nothing to be preserved and it was tired. Mr. Jarek said that the style of this house was commonly found in Newton and that he and the owner did not feel that this house warranted preservation. They also told the Commission that there were older houses in the neighborhood that were more worthy of protection. Grissom said she had been in the house and actually found it to be reasonably intact, that it sat on a nice lot and was set in a neighborhood with intact buildings of similar age, massing and design. Grissom moved to find the house and garage Preferably Preserved and Tellalian seconded.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 28, 2013 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 6-0,

RESOLVED to find the residence and garage at 110 Hawthorne Avenue to be Preferably Preserved.

Voting in the Affirmative:

David Morton, Acting Chair

William Roesner, Member

Rodney Barker, Member

Nancy Grissom, Member

Don Tellalian, Alternate Member

Len Sherman, Alternate Member

170 Windsor Road – Waiver of Demo Delay

Architect Paul McNeilly presented plans on behalf of the current owners, the Frieze family, and prospective owners Robert and Sandra Taylor as part of an application to waive the demolition delay. Commission members reviewed the application and revised plans. Numerous neighbors and abutters were also in attendance. Mr. McNeilly presented the owners' vision for the property and the lot in the overall neighborhood, including the siting of the new house on the property. At issue with many of the attendees was the apparently close proximity of the proposed house to the street. Few spoke to the loss of the existing home.

Staff told the gathering and the Commission that this property consisted of a circa 1892 former barn listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Windsor Road National Register Historic District. This district was listed due to its architectural significance consisting of late-19th and early-20th century architecture and due to its historical association with the development of the village of Waban. This property was originally owned by William Saville, who resided at 126 Windsor Road and worked in Boston in wholesale groceries. In 1924, the building was converted from a barn / garage to a single-family dwelling. Due to the slope of the lot, the lower bay of the barn was converted into a basement level garage. As part of this conversion a new front entry and sun porch were added to the home. In 1928, the sun porch was replaced with a new addition on the west façade and a new porch added to the rear. In 1947 the rear porch was enclosed. The present exterior largely dates to the 1920s and 1940s changes to the building with wood shingle siding, wood windows, and asphalt shingle roofing. Some changes including new windows are also present on the building. The fenestration on the building and massing is not typical of Colonial Revival style and likely resulted from the building being a former barn.

Staff said that the Commission found the building preferably preserved in October 2012. Four months passed since the building was found preferably preserved and the applicants were seeking a waiver of the remaining 18-month demolition delay based upon plans for a replacement building. The proposed building will be sited differently than the present building, oriented toward the street and will be larger in size.

The architect sought to clarify the exact setback in answer to questions posed by members of the audience. He told them the method by which he determined the measurements. Tellalian asked whether the owners planned to install blacktop or crushed stone or equivalent on the proposed front driveway circle. Grissom acknowledged that the neighborhood clearly wanted the house to be set further back on the lot.

Two letters were read into the record: One, in support of waiving the delay, written by Humphrey at 206 Windsor, Jenks at 227 Windsor, and Kelly at 195 Windsor; and another by Paula Wolk at 160 Windsor Road, which was in general support of the project. An owner of the house was also in attendance and spoke in support of the proposed replacement structure and waiving the demo delay. Others in attendance were less enthusiastic about the design of the new structure and asked that it be more articulated on the front façade. They also said the architect was not accurately reading the neighborhood and thought the new house would not fit in.

Grissom moved to waive the demo delay for this property but suggested that the house be moved back slightly in response to the neighborhood's concerns; and required that the owners find a way to pave the front driveway in a more environmentally and visually appropriate manner than asphalt. Tellalian seconded and the motion passed 5-0, with Sherman recused as an abutter.

At a scheduled meeting and public hearing on February 28, 2013 the Newton Historical Commission, by vote of 5-0, with one recusal,

RESOLVED to issue a final approval to waive the demolition delay on the residence at 170 Windsor Road based upon the submitted plans and materials information with the following requirement and suggestion: (1) that the Commission requires that the owners use a more environmentally and visually appropriate material than asphalt for the driveway and (2) that the Commission suggests that the residence be set back further from the street in response to neighborhood concerns.

Voting in the Affirmative:

David Morton, Acting Chair

William Roesner, Member

Rodney Barker, Member

Nancy Grissom, Member

Don Tellalian, Member

Recused:

Len Sherman, Alternate Member

63 Gammons Road – Working Session

Property owner Mitch Bernstein presented an application with the intent to waive the demolition delay, but not immediately, based upon plans for a replacement building. Staff reminded the

Commission that this 1925 Colonial Revival was in a neighborhood of other early 20th century residences including other Colonial Revivals, Tudors, and Dutch Colonials. The home was owned and designed by architect Maurice Feather, who lived there with his wife Bertha. The building had a large shed dormer added to the rear in 1974 and a new side entrance in 1998. The other buildings in the neighborhood have had alterations and additions, but most of the original buildings are still present.

Mr. Bernstein told the Commission that there were no ledge issues on the site after all, which was one of the concerns expressed at the July meeting. He also wanted to show the Commission what he was working on and was not prepared to have a full vote taken tonight. Commission members were in support of the drawings thus far and gave some insight on some minor elements of the design. An abutter who lives at 63 Gammons Road gave his feedback on the project and had many questions answered.

No vote was taken on this project.

Administrative Discussion

Minutes:

The Commission approved the minutes from January 2013 with Tellalian abstaining.

Angier School update:

Staff informed the Commission that Ken DiNisco, lead architect for the new Angier School project, would be on the March 2013 agenda to discuss proposed designs for the new school.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm.